

# House Armed Services Committee

## DEMOCRATS

*For immediate release*

*March 9, 2005*

**Ike Skelton, Ranking Member**

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## **Budget for Space Activities Defended before Subcommittee Panel**

*Washington D.C.—Today the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, heard testimony from Department of Defense representatives concerning their fiscal year 2006 budget request for and status of various space-related activities.*

Ranking Member, Silvestre Reyes (TX), delivered the following opening statement:

“Mr. Chairman, I join you in welcoming our witnesses.

“Our witnesses will present highlights of the 2006 budget request. I hope they can talk in particular about what efforts are being taken to reduce the costs of operating in space and improving our space acquisition process. As the chairman mentioned, we have had problems in space acquisition for the last 15 years, and current events are evidence that the trend continues. Consider the following:

- The SBIRS-High, Advanced EHF, and Navy MUOS programs have all reported significant cost overruns or schedule slips within the last year;
- The cost of the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program will double between FY 2005 and FY 2007;
- The suspension of Boeing, one of our two EELV providers, for violations of the Procurement Integrity Act was lifted last Friday, but the civil suit continues and the company has been essentially placed on a three-year probationary status;
- The Space-based Radar program was almost terminated last year due to affordability concerns. The budget request includes funding for a restructured Space Radar program to launch one or two demonstration satellites, but the future of the program is unclear; and
- The transformational satellite program, which was significantly cut by Congress last year, has rebounded with another large funding increase in the budget request, but concerns about its aggressive schedule remain in many quarters of Congress.

“The chairman also mentioned we are entering a period of “belt-tightening.” I agree. Program Budget Decision 753 will likely be the first of many attempts to reduce costs in the Department of Defense. And as PBD 753 indicated, the modernization accounts will likely bear the brunt of the impact. In fact, although the DoD budget request represents real growth of 2.2 percent overall, the combined procurement and R&D accounts actually shrink in real terms from the FY 2005 level (excluding supplemental funding).

“I don’t think space programs can or should be exempt from looming fiscal constraints. Clearly, the Department, the intelligence community, and the Congress must jointly work together to put our national security space programs on an affordable, sustainable track.

“On this note, I hope our witnesses will explain what efforts they are taking to explore whether we can simplify the missions of our satellites and use smaller, less expensive satellites in the future. Such “small sats” in turn will also be cheaper to launch. There is hope among many space analysts that at least some of the missions that large, multi-mission satellites – “fat sats” – are doing today can be replaced by small sats.

“Physics and mission requirements may preclude small sats for some missions, but as our budget deficits and national debt continue to mount, we must look for more cost-effective ways of meeting our needs.

“Finally, Mr. Chairman, I understand that you plan a future open hearing on what plans the Department may have to put both offensive and defensive weapons capabilities in space, and the pros and cons of weaponizing space. I also understand the subcommittee is scheduling a classified briefing on our space vulnerabilities, the nature and status of the threat, and the offensive and defensive space programs in this year’s budget. I therefore agree with you that today is not the time to delve into those issues, and ask the Members on my side of the aisle to focus on the unclassified aspects of the budget request. As I indicated previously, there are many unclassified space issues that deserve our attention.

“Mr. Chairman, I thank you for calling this important hearing. We have much ground to cover, and I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses. I yield back the balance of my time.

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